Active for Justice

A VOICE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND NONVIOLENCE

VOLUME XXI NO.2 February 2000 PIKES PEAK JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

It starts with me

Craig Kielburger

I usually read the comics in *The Toronto Star* each morning before I go to school. But one day in April 1995, a front-page story stopped me. There was a picture of a smiling boy, his arm upraised. His name was Iqbal Masih. He looked about my age at the time—12. According to the article, he had worked in a carpet factory in Pakistan for most of his life. Then he escaped and traveled in his country and the West, speaking against child labor. The previous Sunday he had been shot dead by an unknown assailant.

"Why was this kid murdered?," I wondered. "Why did he have to work in a factory?" The most my parents asked me to do was to take out the garbage, mow the lawn and get good grades. I never got to the the comics that morning.

I couldn't stop thinking about Iqbal. Here I was in school memorizing algebraic formulas while somewhere kids were tying wool into tiny knots from dawn to dusk. How would I have handled it if I were in their place? The article had said Iqbal's parents, who were extremely poor, had sent him to work in the factory when he was just four Some suspected that the factory owners, angry at Iqbal for exposing their abuses, might be behind his killing.

The library had no current information about child labor and human rights organizations gave me only vague answers. "Why don't they take me seriously? Because I am only 12?"

Then I heard about a group called Youth Action Network. I called Alam Rahman, a recent college graduate whose father had immigrated to Canada from Bangladesh. "If things had been a little different," he said, "I could have been a child laborer."

"So could I," I thought. I said, "I think there should be children's organization fighting child labor. Kids speaking for kids."

"That's great idea, Craig. Why don't you start one." And so I did with my classmates. We met at my house, we did research, we found a name for our group in a story about a rally in Delhi, India were 250 kids chanted, "Free the Children." FTC put together youth fairs; we spoke at schools and churches; collected money and names at garage sales. Through internet and fax we to found first-hand accounts of child labor from kids all over the world. We sent petitions to foreign governments including one with 3000 names to India urging the release of political prisoner Kailash Satyarthi, a leading crusader against child labor. Sometimes people wrote us off as "just kids." But we thought of Iqbal and resolved that FTC would always be made up of just kids.

My parents had been incredibly tolerant of all the late night phone calls and traffic in our house since I'd started FTC. Finally they took me aside . "Next month you'll be starting eighth grade," my mother said. "We're proud of all you've accomplished, but maybe it's time to put FTC behind you." After all, they said, I was advocating kids' right to an education, yet I was working long hours myself.

"I know you think this is just phase," I told them. 'but I've thought and prayed a lot and I really believe I have to do this." The world seemed smaller than it had five months earlier, and for the first time I truly saw myself as part of it.

So FTC moved on into the next school year and continued to grow and gain support. Then one day Alam told me he was planning to spend a year in Asia visiting relatives and traveling. "I'll take you along—this could be your chance to meet some of the workers." My parents trusted and respected Alam but they wouldn't even allow me to ride the subway to downtown Toronto by myself. They wanted detailed explanations of Alam's itinerary, whom I would meet, what safety precautions we would take. I E-mailed contacts around the world, hoping for offers of accommodations. Soon the responses came rolling in.

That fall I was invited to speak at a convention of the Ontario Federation of Labor, my largest audience ever. I was a nervous wreck—an eighth grader speaking to over 2000 adults! But I started with the story of Iqbal. Soon I found my voice. When I finished the room was silent. Then it exploded in applause. They pledged $5000 for our cause. By the end of the evening we had raised $15000 to build a rehabilitation center and schools for child laborers.

Later, over pizza and pop. my friends and I talked about the future. FTC had become bigger than us—it was a real organization. There was no going back.

So we finalized plans for my trip. I arranged to take nearly two months off from school. I left home December 10 and joined Alam in Dhaka, Bangladesh. I wanted to meet as many kids as I could.

In Tamil Nadu, India we talked to parents whose children and been killed or crippled in explosions at a fireworks factory. In Bangkok we saw really young kids being exploited in the sex trade. I talked to 10 year-old boys who had quit school to work 15 hour days to help support their families.

"It is easy to tell these countries that these kids should not have to work under such terrible conditions," a western relief agency official told me. "But remember, a big part of the problem is us. We buy this stuff. Instead of merely being a mar ket for these products, the west needs to help find solutions to the underlying poverty in the Third World." He was right.

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Charlie King boosts Peace Scholarship

Molly Wingate

The Peace Scholarship was kicked off with a great party last winter and now, for its second year, no less than everybody's favorite troubadours, Charlie King and Karen Brandow will bring us all together again to promote the project for the 2000 season. Our very own and much loved First Strike Theatre will open for them.

King and Brandow are a new duo with a long history. King, who has performed frequently in Colorado Springs, has been at the heart of American music for 35 years. His honors include an "Indie" award for one of the top three recordings in 1985; the Peacemaker Award in 1998 from the War Resisters League and, with Pete Seeger's nomination, the Sacco-Vanzetti Social Justice Award,November 1999.

Brandow has been performing with King since 1998. While doing human

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AROUND THE WORLD

Missile-defense follies

Loring Wirbel

What seemed the end of 1999 to be an unstoppable bipartisan crusade to have a National Missile Defense (NMD) deployment program approved by mid-summer, was stopped in its tracks January 18 following the failure of an exoatmospheric missile-killer test launched from Vandenberg. The failure, caused primarily by non-functioning infrared sensors developed by Raytheon Corp., caused members of both parties to suggest to President Clinton that any formal decision on NMD be delayed until after the 2000 elections.

It was encouraging to see the *Gazette* use a 72-point headline on its front page declaring "Missile Misses," along with an article quoting members of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

Unfortunately, the soul-searching by Congress and the Clinton Administration seems limited to the technical problems surrounding the exoatmospheric kill vehicle launched from Kwajalein Atoll. A second missile used in NMD with an even worse track record, the THAAD missile, is still being promoted despite a perfect record of mission failures. And the plans for both a KC-135 airborne laser and a space-based laser are proceeding apace, despite the fact that laser programs would violate the SALT-I Treaty. In a January press conference, outgoing Space Command head Gen. Richard Myers said that space-based lasers were necessary to test the threat that other nations' space-based lasers might blind our own satellites. As with the excuses over chemical weapons, US officials re-fuse to acknowledge that our nation could ever be seen as the aggressor, insisting that our programs always are fully defensive by definition.

That ain't the way it appears to the rest of the world. When a nation is spending more on the military budget than all other nations combined, and has not adjusted its budget downward to account for the end of the Cold War, friend and foe alike will be suspicious, particularly when that nation ends up being the sole, uncontested remaining superpower on the planet.

When those worries are augmented by very public comments by civilian officials like Madeleine Albright and Sandy Berger, that our nation will always act unilaterally, and will only bow to multilateralism when it serves our interests, it's no wonder that many nations doubt our peaceful intent. And when military space officials from the Space Command and National Reconnaissance Office make very public comments about how the US seeks the domination of space and wants to provide "real-time intelligence to the warfighter," suddenly any missile-defense program looks like an offensive attack program to those who doubt our intents. Military analysts of all political stripes agree, we are judged by other nations not by our announced intent, but by our technical capabilities.

Is there a real threat of emerging superpowers, or smaller "rogue states," which warrants NMD deployment, even if the system does not work? In the aftermath of the press furor over spies at Los Alamos publications such as Bulletin

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WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS- AND HOW TO PAY FOR IT

Each block = $1 billion. The total blocks = $78 billion, the world's annual military expenditures. Below are annual costs of various global programs for solving the major human need and environmental problems facing humanity. Each program is the amount needed to accomplish the goal for all in need in the world. Their combined total cost is approximately 30% of the world's total annual military expenditures.

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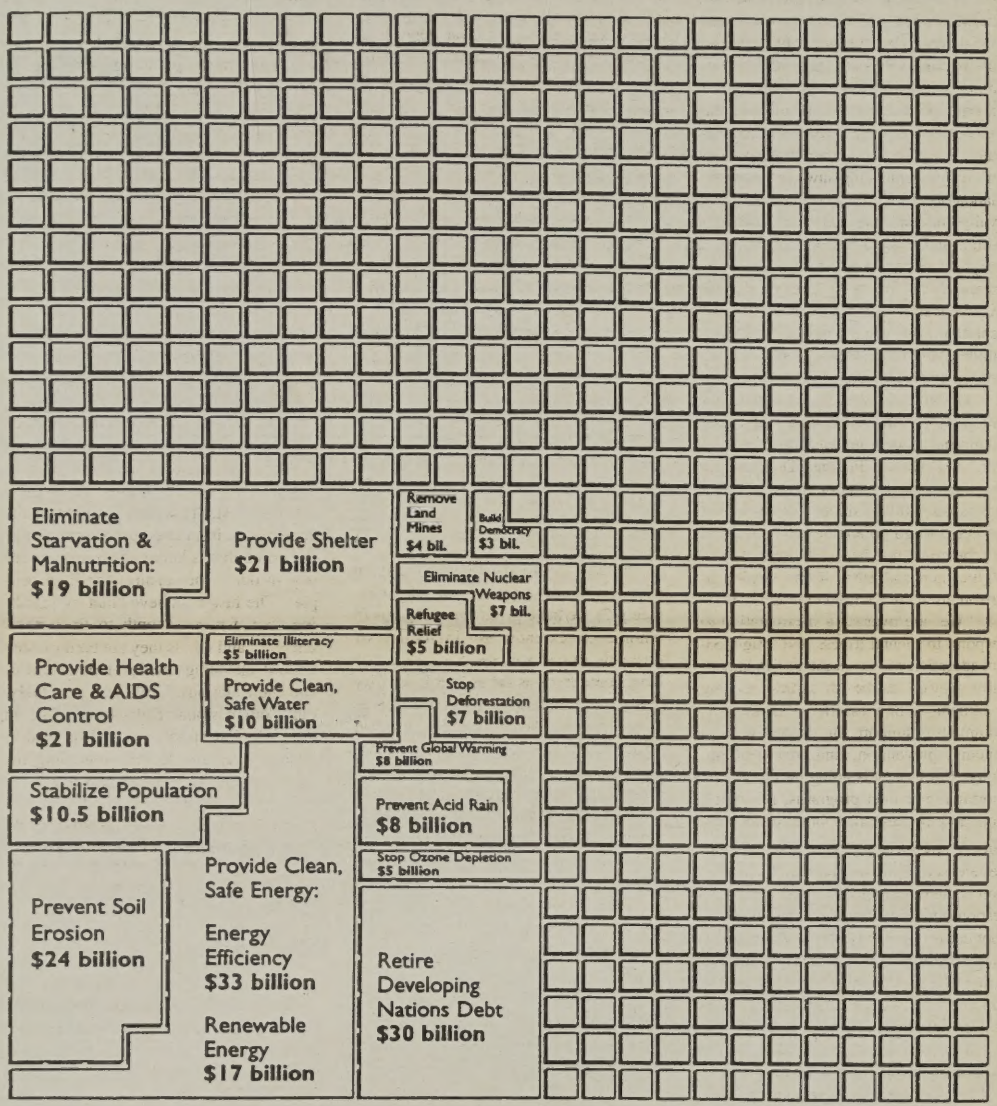
Eliminate Starvation & Malnutrition: $19 billion
Provide Shelter $21 billion
Remove Land Mines $4 bil.
Build Democracy $3 bil.
Eliminate Nuclear Weapons $7 bil.
Refugee Relief $5 billion
Eliminate Illiteracy $5 billion
Provide Health Care & AIDS Control $21 billion
Provide Clean, Safe Water $10 billion
Stop Deforestation $7 billion
Prevent Global Warming $8 billion
Stabilize Population $10.5 billion
Prevent Acid Rain $8 billion
Stop Ozone Depletion $5 billion
Prevent Soil Erosion $24 billion
Provide Clean, Safe Energy:
Energy Efficiency $33 billion
Renewable Energy $17 billion
Retire Developing Nations Debt $30 billion

Washington politician last to know

Susan Gordon

"You mean not a penny of the Oil-for-Food money goes into Saddam's pocket?" queried Senator Wayne Allard at a recent Town Meeting. "That's right," I responded confidently, "all of the revenues from Iraq's oil sales go directly into the New York Branch of the Banc of Paris and are distributed by the UN committee 661 to suppliers once contracts have been fulfilled."

I was relieved during this exchange with Allard to have the facts to challenge one of the many assumptions that underlie the continued justification of the nine-years-old sanctions regime that is robbing thousands of innocent Iraqi children of their lives. That assumption being that the "evil" Saddam Hussein is solely responsible for the suffering of his people and that if he would just stop siphoning off funds and goods from the Oil-for-Food Program then his people would have an adequate amount of food and medicine. The argument that then follows in that we have no choice but to use the weapon of economic sanctions to hold this "cynical tyrant" in check. We've heard it over and over again since our return from Iraq. It is an argument that is bolstered by reports from the State Department of recently constructed palaces and amusement parks and which put emphasis on Saddam's refusal to cooperate with the most recent Security Council resolutions.

We rarely hear the complete story and neither do our politicians. And they won't hear it unless they willingly dig deeper and listen to sources outside the State Department. It became apparent to me through our exchanges with Congressman Hefley and Senator Allard during their recent town meetings and during subsequent briefings with Senator Campbell's and Allard's aides, just how little those policy makers really know about the sanctions. They seemed to depend too much on the little snippets of sometimes false information from State to make and justify their discussions.

Hefley seemed genuinely interested in learning more about the impact of the sanctions at his town meeting and asked repeatedly if there were any additional comments on this topic before he moved on. Because there were at least a dozen of us there in opposition to the sanctions, the discussion lasted almost 20 minutes. Hefley seemed especially surprised and concerned that the sanctions might not be hitting their intended target and instead

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AND BACK AGAIN

ichNo more prisons!

Lee Fischer

Christie Donner, the Rocky Mountain Peace Center's liaison with Prison issues spoke at St. Mary's Cathedral on January 10. Donner came to inform us of the Prison Moratorium bill that is being introduced into the State legislature by Senator Dorothy Rupert and Representatives Pen Tate and Ben Clarke. They are asking our state Legislators to halt further public and private prison expansion until July 1, 2003 and to establish a 17 member Task Force on criminal drug sentencing and alternative options. This task force would evaluate and make policy recommendations on drug sentencing laws, particularly mandatory minimum sentencing and the availability of drug treatment programs within and outside the prisons; the cost and the effectiveness of alternatives to incarceration, including prevention and treatment strategies; minority over-representation; the impact incarceration on children and families and parole, reintegration and recidivism.

The 40 folks who came, at the invitation of St Mary's Justice and Peace committee, were updated on the situation in Colorado Prisons. Donner said that the prison population in our state has increased 400% since 1984 and is expected to go up another 40% by 2005 but the crime rate has gone down! 70% of the men and 80% of the women in prison are there for nonviolent crimes.

"We are overusing incarceration to respond to mental illness and drug/alcohol addiction which should be fundamentally viewed as health issues needing treatment." She asserted that there is community support for alternative sentencing, prevention, and treatment options. But money is going into brick and mortar rather than programs, rehabilitation and reintegration both inside and outside the prisons. 90% of prisoners will be released to the community. Incarceration is the most expensive and short-term response to crime but doesn't address the root causes of crime. The reallocating so many resources to prisons has a destabilizing effect on communities by underfunding education, human services, and community development.

Many in the audience had direct experience with the state prison system and whole-heartedly agreed with Donner's assessment. There was no support for the private, for-profit prisons that are springing up in our state. One selling point to the fearful is that a moratorium will not jeopardize public safety because additional capacity in existing prisons can be made available in the private prisons which are now renting out 1000 beds to other states for their prisoners.

We were urged to write and call our State Senator, Mary Ellen Epps, who serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee to inform her and urge her to support Senate Bill 00-104. Epps needs to know that her constituency has no illusions that prisons stop crime. Donner asked, "Who knows the greatest crime prevention program?" The answer: "A high school education." 80% of Colorado's state prisoners are functionally illiterate!

The status of the bill at this moment is that all the Democrats on the judiciary committee have signed on but at least two of the four Republicans need to support SB 00-104. If they refuse to support the Moratorium, ask them to support the Task Force.

Call Mary Ellen Epps, at the Capitol 303/866-6364 or 719/228-0290 at home; email:mepps@sni.net. Also, write a letter to the editor of the *Gazette*.

Tuesday, February 1 is a "Day of Lobbying" from 9 am to 12 noon. Meet in the State Democratic Office on the 2nd floor of the Capital Building. The following day, February 2 the Judicial Committee Hearings will take place at 1:30 on the third floor. Please come to support a State Moratorium on prison construction.

Lee Fischer is a frequent contributor to Active for Justice

Springs delegation perseveres in working to end sanctions

Susan Gordon

Those of us —Betsy Weil, Luke West, Dorothy Schlaeger and I—who traveled to Iraq are concerned that in our busyness, we may have neglected to properly thank all of you who made our trip possible. We were and continue to be supported in so many ways. The fact that our trip was so widely and generously supported is cause for great hope. Even the *Gazette* supported our sanction-busting. We thank you all for your overwhelming generosity.

But we're not letting you off the hook just yet. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, and it needed to be done yesterday. We need to keep this issue—Wait! Its not even okay to refer to it as just another "issue," because we're talking about thousands of Iraqi children dying each month as a result of a US policy. We need to keep this blatant crime in the forefront of the public's consciousness. Please help us do this.

Our work now feels very urgent as we attempt to fulfill the promises made to our sisters and brothers in Iraq to share their stories so more Americans would know the truth and, hopefully join us in the fight to end the sanctions. According to UNICEF estimates, each day the sanctions are in place 150 innocent children die.

In addition to speaking at the town meetings of our congressional delegation (see p 2) we have given presentations to whomever extends an invitation or responds to our solicitations. Requests have come from as far as Salt Lake City (Luke made that trip) and as numerous as five in one weekend (Dorothy spoke at ALL the Masses at St Francis). Other speaking engagements have included classes and student groups at Colorado College, St Mary's Cathedral, First Congregational Church,a Justfaith Class, and a coffee shop in Alamosa. More are scheduled and all are open to the public. For information about these or to schedule a presentation for your church or group (no number too small) please call the office 632-6189.

Our local planning group continues to meet at least monthly to plan strategy for the ongoing campaign to end the sanctions. We had a great showing Jan. 11 at Rep. Hefley's Town Meeting thanks to Stephen Weil who made all those phone calls! We need to continue to write and call Hefley to voice our opposition and hold him to his commitment to "look into it." At a briefing with Sen. Campbell's staff we learned the interesting fact that he was a recent recipient of UNICEF's "Champion of the Children" award. It is time he became a champion of the children of Iraq. We also need to raise the issue with Sen. Allard.

The next planning meeting is Monday, February 7 at 6:30 pm at the Justice and Peace office. Everyone is encouraged to come. We will be working on final details for a Witness Against the Sanctions scheduled for February 14, at 12 noon at the downtown Post Office. We will gather there in solidarity with those who are participating in an action at the UN Mission in New York.

David Thieman, Betsy and I will represent our local group at the this action in New York which culminates a weekend gathering, "We Remember, We Resist" sponsored by Voices in the Wilderness.

On our way to New York we three will be stopping in Washington DC for two days to support eleven members of Voices who will be nearing the end of a 30 day fast. This fast, which began January 15, is an attempt to approximate the crime that is being committed every day in our names against the Iraqi people. The fasters believe "that by forsaking food for one month to focus their energies and minds they are taking a step toward elevating the level of action to end the sanctions." We will also lobby our Congressional Delegation while in the nation's Capitol. We will be glad to hand deliver any letters regarding the sanctions to your representatives.

Susan Gordon is a Board Member of the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission

Citizens for Peace in Space Update

Bill Sulzman

We are planning some out of town outreach over the next few months, January 31-February 1 in Albuquerque and April 14-17 in Washington DC.

Locally two recent happenings deserve some mention. On January 13 at the same town meeting at which a strong appeal against the continuation of the economic sanctions against Iraq was made, Senator Wayne Allard was asked about recent satellite photos which debunk the seriousness of the North Korean missile threat. He immediately t hid behind a "secret" information cover. He could not, of course, divulge that information so we were asked to just take his word for it. Although in the discussion that followed he did admit that "sometimes spy agencies supply the intelligence committees with misleading information." He affirmed his strong support for the current version of a missile defense that is scheduled to be voted up or down this summer.

On January 8 , on the eve of the latest anti-missile test on the Pacific Missile Range, Peter Sprunger-Froese and I bannered outside the gate of Schriever AFB with messages challenging the current test and the ultimate deployment of a missile system which promises to spur a new surge in the nuclear arms race.

The next local event to make note of is the change of command at the US Space Command set for sometime in February. Call us at 389-0644 if you're interested in more information on that.

Bill Sulzman is a founder and current director of Citizens for Peace in Space

King

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rights work in Guatemala from 1986-1994, she studied voice and performance at the Angelica Rosa Academy of Performing Arts and classical guitar in the National Conservatory of Music. She performed at numerous political/cultural events in that country as a soloist and was a founding member of the a cappella singing group, the Non-Traditional Imports. One of the products of her doctoral studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst was a book about the Guatemalan Labor movement, *The Sky Never Changes* (1996).

The concert on March 12 will be free and open to the public but a free-will offering will be taken up for the benefit of the Justice and Peace Scholarship.

Two high school seniors will be offered a scholarship of $1000 each at their graduation. The deadline for applications is March 25, 2000. So young men and women, the time to apply is now! And, not-so-young folks, if you know of a likely candidate please pass this good word on to them. Applications may be picked up at the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Office at 235 E. Fountain Blvd. The criteria for the Scholarship is that you be a person who understands and is committed to nonviolence and whose plans for the future are to grow in that commitment through experience and /or formal education. You will include two references—one from your school setting and the other from outside that environment. After March 25 the selection committee will winnow applications and then will interview the top contenders.

"The best part," says Tom Noonan, "is meeting the young people. They are all great. We can't give them all scholarships, but they all are 'winners'"

John Gudvagen is the chair of the Scholarship committee. Other members are Abi Affonja, Carole Huber, Christina Martinez, Steve Milligan, Mary Malloy and Tom Noonan.

Thanks to Molly Wingate, who arranges for King' annual CC concert, this one has been has declared a benefit for the Scholarship. So mark your calendars and look forward to a delightful entertainment and an opportunity to contribute to the Peace and Justice Scholarship Fund. In the name of the winners, and all the people their lives will touch, we thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Molly Wingate is director of the Writing Center at Colorado College

Editorial

Who are the children who, coming to maturity in the next fifteen to thirty years, will be the parents, the educators, the public servants, the governors of the 21st century? They are the youth of the world of the year 2000.

They are the children close to home—our children and grandchildren, our students, the kids at the corner playground, the little league players, the Pokimon collectors, the soup kitchen volunteers, the smashers of all the lights on the new pedestrian bridge, the Habitat for Humanity workers. They are the children we influence every day, not so much by what we say but by what we do and what we choose not to do. They are the children who observe us; who, uncannily, see right through us.

The majority of the world's emerging leaders are growing up in the third world where an obscene number of them go to bed hungry every night and formal education is a luxury beyond their wildest dreams. Our influence there is also alarmingly great.

We are the consumers who, insisting on cheap prices, buy the food they grow and harvest but cannot afford to eat; we're the buyers of clothing and gadgets assembled or produced by children in sweat shops. And, God help us, some of us even buy body parts that have been removed from third world children—with or without their consent—to be transplanted in us to prolong our lives.

Some of us are the trainers and educators of their elites, passing on US values and priorities of laissez faire capitalism. Other of us, instead, are learning to listen, to learn their language and culture and, in learning from them, give them their due respect.

Today we are all sowing the seeds-for good or ill—for tomorrow, the world of the 21st century. History need not repeat itself— our tragic mistakes *could* be redeemed if they serve as lessons on what *not* to do.

If we could only pass on one thing it might be the sense of responsibility expressed in the concern native Americans have for the "seventh generation," Thus before each decision—choice, engagement, acquisition, disposal, pursuit— we ask ourselves " How will this effect the world and those who inhabit it seven generations from now?"

Barbara Huber

FTC

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In Pakistan , I talked to a boy making bricks. "Would you like to go to school?" I asked.

"What is school?" he asked me. All around I saw the poverty and realized the choice was pretty clear in many cases: work or starve.

I also met plenty of young people in school and former child laborers who were determined to make things better for kids who weren't so fortunate. They were dealing with this problem years before I even heard of it.

But it was the working children I met who made the biggest impact. We found a girl with a ribbon in her hair in a run down building in Madras, India. With no protection for her hands she was taking apart used syringes so the plastic could be recycled. "Sometimes I cut myself," she said, "But I always wash with water." I wanted to take her with me but a woman came in and told us that if the girl's boss found her talking to us she would be punished. We left her behind.

Then in Varanasi, India, we were contacted by Kailash Satyarthi, the man whose release FTC has petitioned for months earlier. He had been let go, and recently he had led a raid on a carpet factory, setting free 22 children. He invited us to help see them safely home.

We crammed into two Jeeps. The boy next to me was eight and his name was Munnilal. "I was given no money by my master," he told me. "I was hit again and again." The Jeep jostled as we drove down into a creek and then it got stuck in the mud. Everyone jumped out and pushed it. When we reached the shore, I stood there, exhausted and soaking wet. Munnilal took a blanket from around his shoulders and held it out to me "Here you'll catch cold," he said.

"No you keep it." I said, staring at this child who had been through more hardship in eight years than I would ever go through. He had almost nothing, but what he had he offered me.

We got back into the Jeeps and drove the children to their villages stopping to watch each reunion.

Munnilal's mother hugged him weeping. "When I hurt most,," he said to her." I saw you in my dreams." "I saw you in my dreams, too." she said."

I thought of my Mom waiting for my calls, the way she was marking off the days of my trip on the calendar . Suddenly I felt terribly homesick.

But there was one more stop to make, the one that I had thought about most. In Muridke, Pakistan, we walked down the route of Iqbal's funeral procession. "The day Iqbal died, a thousand Iqbals were born," A girl had said at his funeral. I was grateful to be one of them.

As I stood before his unmarked grave, I thought back to the story about him that changed my life. The world had come into a new focus that day. I saw lots of injustice, but I also saw how to change it. It starts with me—with each one of us, with what we can do to make things better. I took the first step because of Iqbal, but I continue it because of Munnilal and the little girl in Madras.

Seventeen-year-old Craig Kielburger is a high school student in Toronto. Order his book, Free the Children:A Young Man's Personal Crusade Against Child Labor ***(Harper Collins) through FTC's web site: www.freethechildren.org or at 12 E. 48 St., NY,NY 10017***

The Children's Appeal for Peace

Farliz Calle

Today, I would like to choose my best feelings and my best words to send to all the children of the world my message of PEACE, since my youthfulness and my heart—which is still that of a child—belong to one who knows war but who loves peace over everything.

I come from Colombia, but I could also say that I come from Yugoslavia, Angola, Somalia, Afghanistan, Rwanda or Amsterdam 45 years ago. Unfortunately all these places are famous but not because of friendly people or their wonderful natural resources, but because of war and violence. Two days ago I visited the home of Anne Frank in Amsterdam. I remembered her words and her suffering. She was 15 years old at the time of the war and today many children suffer as she did.

I live in Uraba, one of the most violent areas in Colombia and the world. I am fifteen years old like Anne Franke. Mrs Graca Machel came to our town because she was preparing a study about the impact of armed conflict on children. I listened to her again at the United Nations in New York when she said that "the worst thing that can happen is for a society to accept violence against children as normal."

For the children of the Movement for Peace in Columbia her visit and her words have always been with us and inspired us.

This is the reason why 2,700,000 Colombian boys and girls voted in November 1996 for the Right to Peace and for all our rights. Following this unprecedented example, 10 million adults —our parents, teachers and neighbors— voted one year later in the Citizens Mandate for Peace, Life and Liberty. In the Mandate Ciudadano, the people of Colombia demanded that the actors of the armed conflict should stop involving children in the war, that they should end torture, there should be no more threats, nor kidnapping, nor massacres and no more displacement of the civilian population from their homes.

All these actions impressed our good friend Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta, who won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1996, and who believes that we children are also part of this group of dreamers who fight to build a better world,a world worthier and happier in which boys and girls are the best treasure.

Our example of mobilization in 1996 unchained the current process of peace that is being developed in Colombia. That is the reason why I am convinced that today, the nations of the world have in their hands a great tool—the opportunity of allowing children to participate actively in all matters that especially affect us.

Here today, in this Forum,in the year in which we are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we request all countries, and all adults in the world, to assist us with all possible means—to enable us to organize ourselves, to listen to us and to take our opinions into consideration so that it will be possible to start the new millennium with a new hope: Peace in the world, peace in our countries, peace in our homes, peace in our hearts.

In this world life is becoming harder and harder for children. In spite of advances in technology, war and armies have become more sophisticated and children are increasingly involved in this culture of death. Crimes against Humanity are even more inhuman when they are inflicted on children, There is nothing more cruel than the rape of girl or a boy or forcing a child to be a murderer.

Everybody present here, and everyone listening to me must promise that we will all try to end the impunity that allows people to abuse their power in the world, to stop those who torture other people, and to stop all those who are cutting the dreams, the hope and the happiness of children.

Right now, in this great event in the Hague, the children of the Movement for Peace of Columbia, claim that "never again" will our right to survival be denied. Instead, by enjoying the exercise of all our rights we know that the children of the earth will discover the opportunity to build a new world. To achieve this I ask all of you to make your own commitment to the pledge of the Citizens Mandate of Peace, Life and Liberty of Columbia.

Promise that there will be no more child soldiers, no more atrocities, no more war.

15-year-old Farliz Calle presented this paper in Spanish at the opening session of the The International Hague Appeal for Peace, May, 1999

High school students, Meg Young and Judith Barnet shared their views on peace in the new Millennium at the concert on First Day, January I , 2000.

Peace: a want, a need, a goal

Meg Young

It is rather overwhelming to think of the world of examples that are before me, expressing feelings of hate, ignorance, prejudice and injustice. I find it easy to become caught in a web of these strong emotions. It is hard to truly honor, respect and welcome every person, and it is painful to have the realization that I don't. I can try, though. I have an irrepressible faith in our global community. I feel that we will find that, no matter what religion, spirit, gods, or presence we put our faith in, we come back with the same realization: Peace will overcome, love conquers all, equality is a necessity.

I am honestly worried about the future. When I walk into my high school, I hear the word gay used as a derogatory adjective for everything from homework to vending machines. Many of my male friends dream of joining one of the armed forces, and I constantly hear harassment directed towards one group of kids in the halls.

I see and hear these things and I wonder what these blooming adults are going to be like once they develop and become set in their dogma. The thought scares me.

Then I take another look at these children. They are crashing through life at a pace just as rapid as mine, all of us just as scared and self-conscience, attempting to state what we believe, make our mark, and fit in. I than realize that peace is really present, though in different forms than I expected.

Once we can realize this, we will begin our journey toward peace, as a whole, together. We will pick each other up along the way, and find shelter in one another's arms. There is light at the end of the tunnel, we have already begun the journey! It will be slow, painful. and draining, but we will overcome.

Peace is a thought, a dream and a want, a need, a goal... a reality.

Peace. Can it truly be a reality in this cruel world? Has it ever been achieved in the past? Can we achieve it in the future? Do we already have a whole pot of it in the back of the refrigerator? The answer is this: Help others, love yourself and believe in your dreams, because, there's no day but today.

Judith Barret

Peace is unity. No person can achieve harmony everywhere, no matter how hard they try. Everyone must work together. Author and illustrator, Stephen Kellogg, once said, " If everyone has the same dream, it might come true." If everyone believes, peace is possible. The future is ours. Dream your dreams, make them come true.

High school students are generally some of the most calculating critical, and unaccepting people in our world. This is demonstrated to me every day as I go to school. People who dare to be their own person, think outside the box, or make an impact, are ridiculed and put down. People who "march to their own drum" are not accepted. What is so heart breaking is that this degradation is not checked. While students are taught the plural form of *cheval* and are corrected on their spelling, no one challenges the way they see and react to others. This is a daily example to myself and my

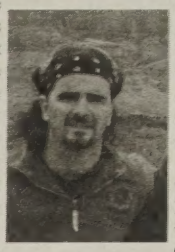
please turn to First Day p 7

Guest Editorial

Why I am not going to buy my sons a GameBoy

Rob Gordon

Christmas has come and gone and, from what I can tell, the only toy many American children have not become bored with is their GameBoy. This is a little hand-held electronic device that accepts cartridges of various action and adventure games that you play by pressing the three buttons on its front. Like the larger electronic games of my generation, the buttons, more often than not, are used to do battle with aliens brandishing some form of advanced weaponry.



As a mechanism for capturing a child's attention, the GameBoy is better than television because it is both relatively cheap and portable. It is also a largely individual pursuit. Except for the occasional over-the-shoulder kibitzing, the GameBoy is a private experience. It is the perfect tool for training children to grow up to be highly individualistic consumers.

A stretch, you say? What temperament is best suited for shaping by the advertising that delivers purchasers? The ideal consumer is one who wants his or her every wish satisfied immediately. The rush to sell computer screen "real estate" to advertisers and the convergence of computer and television technology, resulting in interactive TV, is designed to accommodate this perfect customer. See an ad. Click a button. Make a purchase. Delivered to your door without leaving your couch!

When video games are not desensitizing children to violence-which is rare-they are conveying, much like television, the message to children that they are the center of the universe, they are in control, their choice is all that matters, and the push of the button will get them what they want. What better way to reinforce this idea than with a little electronic device that can go wherever I go and responds to a push of a button?

This is not a scientific position I am asserting. I know of no studies that link video games with consumptive impulses. I have relied on my own common sense informed with a healthy skepticism toward technology, an unequivocal distrust of advertising, and a deference to ancient wisdom to arrive at this position.

The ancient wisdom to which I refer goes something like this: make a child the center of the universe and what you get is, in most circles, called a "spoiled brat." Spoiled brats grow up to make good "captains of industry" (cf. Bill Gates) but not very good citizens, insofar as citizenship is any longer distinct from consumptive activities.

In this high-tech world, where Lincoln Logs have fallen out of fashion, what alternative is there to GameBoy? In what type of activities do I think our children, my children, should be engaged? I will leave the specifics up to the children, but the general answer involves lots of children, outside. From there, the imagination of the children can take over. If they stand around whining about being bored, then put them to work, I say. There is nothing like the threat of work to fire a child's imagination.

That there are lots of children (two is enough) is important because it creates conflict that requires negotiation, and sometimes a nearby adult, to resolve. Here the skills of compromise, taking turns and respecting others' wishes are practiced. That the play is outside is important for a multitude of reasons: the weather is not under the child's control, there is the possibility of real danger (I am talking here of snakes and bugs, not human predators-the nearby adult is needed here, too), the possibilities for unmediated interaction with nature are endless and mystery abounds.

The GameBoy experience provides none of these opportunities or experiences. The child sits, eyes focussed on a barely legible screen, fingers frantically pressing buttons, oblivious to the real world. As one observer noted, "You don't even know they are there."

These are the reasons I will not be buying my sons a GameBoy. These, and the fact their grandmother has already bought them one. Aaaarrrrgggggh!

Rob Gordon is the father of Matthew, Kilian and Kieran.

Child soldiers

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers believes that more than 120,000 children under 18 years of age are currently participating in armed conflicts across Africa. Some of these children are not more that 7 or 8 years of age.

. In addition to the obvious risks of participating in armed conflict—children are often at an added disadvantage as combatants. Their immaturity may lead them to take excessive risks—according to one rebel commander in the Democratic Republic of Congo, "[children] make good fighters because they're young and want to show off. They think it's' all a game, so they're fearless." Moreover, and as a result of being widely perceived to be dispensable commodities,they tend to receive little or no training before being thrust into the front line. Reports from Burundi and Congo-Brazzaville suggest that they are often massacred in combat.

Children may begin participating in conflict from as young as the age of seven. Some start as porters (carrying munitions) or messengers, others as spies. One rebel commander declared that "They're very good at getting information. You can send them across enemy lines and nobody suspects them because they're so young." And as soon as they are strong enough to handle an assault rifle or a semi-automatic weapon—normally at 10 years of age—children are used as soldiers. One former child soldier form Burundi stated that: "We spent sleepless nights watching the enemy. My first role first role was to carry a torch for grown-up rebels. Later I was shown how to use hand grenades. Barely within a month or so, I was carrying an AK-47 rifle or even a G3."

When they are actively engaged in combat, they can often be seen manning checkpoints; adult soldiers can normally be seen standing 15 meters further behind the barrier so that if bullets start flying, it is the children who are the first victims. And in any given conflict when even a few children are involved as soldiers, all children, civilian or combatant, come under suspicion. A recent military sweep in Congo-Brazzaville, for instance, killed all "rebels who had attained the 'age of bearing arms'."

Girls too are used as soldiers, though generally in much smaller numbers than boys. In Liberia, "about one percent of the demobilized child soldiers [in 1996-7] were girls or young women, but many more took part in one form or another in the war. Like many males, females joined one of the factions for their own protection. "Unwillingly, they became the girlfriends or wives of rebel leaders or members: 'wartime women' is the term they themselves use."

Concy A, a 14 -year old girl, was abducted from Kitgum in Uganda and taken to Sudan by the LRA. "In Sudan we were distributed to men and I was given a man who had just killed his woman. I was not given a gun, but I helped in the abductions and grabbing of food from villagers. Girls who refused to become LRA wives were killed in front of us to serve as warning to the rest of us." The risks to these girls of sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies are enormous.

Girls are also the victims of child soldiers. In Algeria, a young woman from one of the villages where massacres had taken place said that all the killers were boys under 17. Some boys who looked to be around 12 decapitated a 15 year-old girl and played "catch" with the head.

Atrocities have all too frequently been committed by child soldiers, sometimes under the influence of drugs or alcohol which they are forced to take. But drugs alone do not account for all the atrocities. It is their systemic abuse by adults, combined with a pervasive culture of violence that is ultimately responsible. In March 1998, at a trial of a 13-year-old DRC soldier who had shot and killed a Red Cross volunteer in Kinshasa after a dispute on a football pitch, even the prosecution declared that the lack of control of boy soldiers was as much the fault of the older commanders and constituted extenuating circumstances. The boy was, nonetheless, condemned to death, although President Kabila later commuted the sentence to life imprisonment.

In most African nations there are laws against child soldiers and many of those states—Benin, Camaroon, Mali and Tunisia to name but a few—appear to follow appropriate recruitment procedures that prevent underage troops. However, in Angola, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Uganda, children no more than seven or eight years of age, are recruited by government armed forces almost as a matter of course. Some children do volunteer to join, though the true number will vary depending on how one interprets the word volunteer. In the DRC, for example, between 4,000 and 5,000 adolescents responded to a radio broadcast calling (in clear violation of international law) for 12-20 year-olds to enroll to defend their country. Most were street children.

please see Soldiers p 7

DIGGING ROOTS/PLANTING SEEDS

In cool winter days Frankenfoods heat up

Andy Ziem

Monsanto, the "mother" of Terminator technology (the "suicide" seeds), is under attack from all directions. Their stock has dropped 35% over the past 12 months. Uprootings of genetically engineered (GE) crops continue more frequently in Europe. Exports of soybeans and other crops to foreign nations in Europe and Japan decline because they are mixed with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Following other countries, Greece has recently announced a moratorium on GMO. More and more, American media voices the opposition, and activists are winning demands to label GMOs internationally. Even the US Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, who has been a strong supporter of GMO, commented, "If the consumers demand labeling—even if we think it doesn't convey a lot of good stuff—we're probably going to end up with a labeling scheme." Afterwards. forty-eight members of the US Congress and Senate signed a letter to the FDA demanding GMO labeling.

In a series of recent victories Gerber, Heinz, Vitasoy and Archer Daniels Midland (a grain giant) claimed they will go GMO free. As Burger King promises to use no GMOs in its products other companies like McDonalds are expected to follow suit. In England, Granada Food Services announced it will no longer serve GMOs to its customers, who ironically include the cafeteria at Monsanto UK headquarters.

Still the storm is not past. Of foods on grocery store shelves, 60-79% contain GE components. This number is expected to rise. We humans eat this stuff, but a September *ACRES USA Special Report* says hungry, thinning cows are walking through GE corn fields to non-GE varieties. The GE food is directly in their path, but they walk out of their way to get non-GE feed. Steven Sprinkel, A GMO farmer in South Dakota, is one of the many farmers who has had this experience. He jests with tongue in cheek that after his prolonged exposure to GMOs and the related Monsanto Roundup pesticide, "I'll bet my blood will kill mosquitoes now." Sprinkel is assumed to be an optimist.

Next on the endangered species list is 'Terminator Technology. Activists cheered October 4 as Monsanto announced that it will continue developing the Terminator only for "internal use." Critics denounced this as only a strategic diversion, as the USDA's support for Monsanto continues uninterrupted and Monsanto begins work on a new project, dubbed "Son of Terminator."

Frankenfoods are not inclusive only to plants and bacteria. Farm-bred GE Salmon threaten American and European wild salmon populations. William Muir and Richard Howard of Purdue University have dubbed their discovery of "trojan gene"hypothesis. The salmon have escaped protected farms during the past few years and have been mating with wild species, producing hybrids that are unable to survive in the open ocean. The farm-bred fish are grown to be "fat and lazy," says Sue Scott, of the Atlantic Salmon Federation of Canada. Wild female salmon mate with GE salmon (instead of wild species) because their large size makes them more attractive. The Purdue researchers modeled the outcome of 60 transgenic salmon breeding with a wild population of 60,000. The population became extinct in 40 generations.

Hogs no longer have to eat like pigs, thanks to GE. These "new" swine or Enviropigs, eat 25% less than normal pigs (saving farmers money), and grow faster. Because they eat less, they produce less manure. Canadian researchers had added an enzyme to their saliva to decrease phosphorus secreted in their manure, preventing water pollution.

Monsanto and the USDA assure GMOs are safe for human consumption. Meanwhile, FDA scientists warn that GE foods could "produce a new protein allergen." GMO damage to the human immune system has been proven valid. GE tomatoes have been proven to mutate human DNA. The Bt toxin, derived from soil bacteria and reproduced by GE corn, is confirmed to kill monarch butterfly caterpillars. Other studies surprised scientists that the Bt toxin does not degrade quickly in weeks like expected. After eight months of research the toxin was still present, and researchers just cut the experiment. The toxin probably lasts much longer than that.GE, used in beer production, is engineered to work more efficiently, but produces unnaturally large quantities of a highly toxic and mutagenic substance known as methylglyoxal, discovered by Dr. Michale Antoniou of Molecular pathology in London. Further studies may prove it to be carcinogenic. (cancer causing)

The empirical evidence against GMOs is accumulating and cannot be ignored. Acting on proof that rBGH (an inhumane chemical injected in cows to increase their production of milk) causes several types of cancer, Canada and other countries have banned its usage and the import of milk products created using it. Considering the burning of test fields, consumer disapproval and falling Monsanto stock, Europe's largest bank, Deutsche Bank, warned its investors in a May report to sell shares of companies developing GMOs.

In addition, the promised virtues of GE crops are being disproved. GE crops do not consistently yield higher than competitors. GE crops use more, not less, pesticides— pesticides that further contaminate food and the environment. GE promised resistance to pests, but pests are developing resistance to GE toxins. Because the toxins are damaging the soil, GE crops have drastically lower nutritional values.

Activists are currently targeting Nestle's double standard: Nestle has promised European countries GMO-free products but nothing in America. Letters of opposition are pouring in under the driving force of Greenpeace. Similar action turned Gerber GMO policy in recent months. Your letters help now:

Mr. Joe Weller
Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Nestle USA, Inc.
800 North Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203

In August a test field of GE brussels sprouts was carefully quarantined by Greenpeace activists. Though the new crop successfully protects itself from predator insects(so far), it also kills benevolent insects like the ladybug. The next time Mom tells you to eat your brussels sprouts, think twice: You may be eating the latest GE bio-experiment.

Andy Ziem is a senior at Liberty High school a frequent contributor to Active for Justice.

Follies

continued from p 2

publications such as *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and *Brill's Content* have run exposes on the FBI abuse of power at Los Alamos, and the *New York Times'* pathetic attempt to convict Wen Ho Lee before a trial. The conclusions are that, even if China stole information on the W-78 warhead, that nation is so far behind the US on the intercontinental missile deployment, it would mean nothing strategically for decades to come.

Smaller nations are showing a limited ability to develop missiles of an intermediate capability, around 1000-mile range, but these efforts are being exaggerated by members of the Congress to suggest intercontinental launch capabilities that simply do not exist. In January, the Federation of American Scientists published images on its Web site, purchased from Colorado-based Space-Imaging Inc, which showed that an oft-cited North Korean missile test site for the smaller Nodong and two-stage Taepo Dong missile had far less capabilities than pro-NMD supporters had claimed. John Pike of FAS said the photos showed an "underwhelming missile test facility."

The response? Arch-conservative gadfly Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy called for the heads of FAS and Space Imaging officials. The thing that made the NMD proponents the maddest was that someone would dare to carry out grassroots intelligence gathering that would challenge the intelligence conclusions of official US agencies and Congressional committees. Ironically, NRO spokesman Rick Oborn was the most open of all, suggesting that one should look at citizen and commercial space intelligence as a case of "The more , the merrier." But MND supporters like Curt Weldon did everything short of calling the FAS treasonous for publishing the photos.

Perhaps, if a decision on NMD is really postponed until a new administration, we will see some worthwhile debate in the presidential campaign over how well NMD works, and what its purpose really is. It is important to recognize that few members of either major party are isolationist in this subject. Rather they show varying degrees of domination,unilateralism and triumphalism. They don't want the US to disengage from the world, they want the US to own the world.

Consequently, progressives should ratchet the missile-defense debate up a notch by demanding candidates talk about issues like US planetary domination, abrogation of the SALT-I Treaty, and real missile capabilities of the "rogue states."

A good start on changing the nature of the debate will come in mid-April when the Global Network hosts a weekend of protests and lobbying efforts in Washington DC, targeting the NMD program in particular and space militarization in general. The events will feature an April 14 demonstration at the Treasury Department, and an April 15 conference at American University, "Star Wars Revisited." For more information, call CPIS locally at 719/389-0644; contact Global Network at 352/337-9274 or e-mail globalnet@mindspring.com. Alternatively, you can visit the Global Network's Web site at www.globenet.free-online.co.uk

Technical writer, Loring Wirbel, is an active member of CPIS

Politicians

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were hurting innocent civilians. Was this the first time he was hearing this side of the story? He said he'd "look into it." Hopefully it won't be another nine years and 1.5 million deaths before he "looks into it."

Senator Allard, on the other hand, quickly moved onto another topic after my 3 minute discourse on the sanctions, so as not to respond to my comments. Unwilling to let him off the hook so easily, after five minutes, I gently shouted from my seat, "Senator Allard, would you please respond to my comments on Iraq?" His response was in the form of an accusatory question regarding Saddam's interference with our great generosity in the form of Oil-for-food. If only HE would stop doing what he is doing.

It has also become more apparent to me how these arguments about how awful Saddam is serve to deflect any of the responsibility for the continued suffering of the Iraqi people away from the US government—the most powerful player on the Security Council. In doing so they help maintain this country's image as the "greatest nation, (I lost count of how many times both Hefley and Allard used those words.) protector of all, once again coming to the aide of victimized people." By assigning all the blame to Saddam, policy makers can continue to justify the sanctions as a necessary means without looking at our part in the repression of the Iraqi people. As Hans Von Sponeck, the current UN Coordinator of the Oil-for-Food program, said, when we met him in Iraq "Repression is still repression, whether it comes from within or without. "

It is our challenge as we continue to educate the public and our congressional delegates not to engage in dead end arguments about what Saddam has done or not done to his people in the past. We need to ask, "What is OUR government doing to his people right now?" "What is the goal of the sanctions policy and has nine years of economic warfare and the deaths of over 1 million Iraqi men, women and children brought us any closer to that goal?" Isn't it time to step back and acknowledge that the sanctions are not working and are in fact only adding to the suffering of the Iraqi people?

Given the ignorance and misinformation surrounding the arguments that are out there, we have our work cut out for us. But with information gained from our trip to Iraq and the additional research we continue to do, we are better prepared to refocus the debate towards the discussion of the US government's role in the continued suffering of the Iraqi people and the power we have to do something about it.

Susan Gordon is one of the Colorado Springs delegates who were in Iraq 11/25-12/5/99.

LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Kudos to Laura Gagnon for a great article in the January AfJ. I appreciated her view of spirituality, beyond religion.

Susan Baker

Dear Friends,

We are all deeply affected by the violent extent to which our nation will go in waging war. The varieties seem endless. Our faith shudders under the load. I will explain my thoughts about this. Recently I watched a television segment showing the city of Hiroshima, Japan hours after the US atomic bomb dropped. Years ago, I was astounded by this scene of destruction. Mile upon mile of waste and rubble. 75,000 men, women and children instantly dead. Another 125,000 lingering deaths. Then another bomb dropped on Nagasaki three days later.

Exactly 53 years after Hiroshima, Sachio Ko-Yin and I were standing with our sledgehammers directly above a Minuteman III missile in Colorado. It is on hair-trigger"launch-on-warning" alert status. During our jury trial a launch control officer testified for the prosecution. This is the person who turns the key that launches missiles. He angrily pointed at me from the witness stand and shouted, "I'm doing this for you!" Thus the threat of nuclear genocide, masked under the well-known euphemism of "deterrence," protected under law, led to our convictions.

Right now, all 500 Minuteman III ICBMs are undergoing guidance system renovations costing $2.7 billion. This will be completed in 2001 and will bring these first strike weapons to super-accurate levels. All rocket motors will be replaced by 2001 for compatibility with the latest solid fuel propellant. Recently completed, the 50 launch control centers (one for every ten missiles) have been equipped with "Rapid Execution and Combat targeting." This allows retargeting of each missile within minutes to preset coordinates. It also becomes possible to "stand down" the missiles, yet retain the ability to go instantly to alert and launch. Third World nations without nuclear weapons are among those now targeted. Our nation continues to trust violence that is unimaginable.

In my somewhat monastic prison life, there has been plenty of time to reflect on matters of importance. While walking during the early mornings on the outside tract, I am always struck by the beauty of creation as the sun begins to rise. Duck, geese, deer—all frequent these rolling hills and fields. Friendly skunks come here to eat food scrapes right from an inmate's hand. In the distance I can see a church steeple, and occasionally its bells are heard.

The center of devotion in the church is the one who said,"Love your enemies." This is not an open-ended question or suggestion, but a command. It is included in the Sermon on the Mount, the heart of the Gospel, upon which this church and countless others were founded. Ignored, selectively obeyed, sentimentalized or trivialized because of national security priorities, these words are still a reason why people put one foot in front of the other to enter the church door. In so entering , people put themselves in the presence of nonviolence and forgiveness. This is alien to national security machinery, which operates by means of threats and retaliation, as in "Don't tread on me." Certainly, to threaten any people or nation with nuclear extinction (as we do with our possession of first-strike nuclear weapons) is the ultimate violation and rejection of the Gospel imperative of "Love your enemies." Following this imperative is not easy. It's hard work. This much I am Learning.

On the lighter side: Life here is not always heavy and serious. I still enjoy a good laugh and feel supported and loved by many on the outside. Days go by fast and are full with a cleaning job, answering mail, reading, exercising, meditation, waiting for meals in long lines. Inmates often join in for yoga sessions outside when it is warm. Sachio, my very active and happy Plowshares partner seems to be thriving at nearby Allenwood Prison Camp. Good News! Plowshare vs Depleted Uranium action December 19.

Daniel Sicken #28360-013
Federal Prison Camp, Unit 1
P.O.Box 2000
Lewisburg, PA 17837-2000

First Day

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peers, and is so easy sometimes to feel far from hopeful. I feel as it a black cloud is weighing on my spirit, crushing my conscience and binding my personality.

But suppose a ray of light were to break thought that cloud, and slowly grow to envelop me in light. What if we could learn to be different? What if we could make ourselves think differently than those high school students? What if we could learn to place compassion above contrast, love above popularity? What if we could learn to accept all races, all religions, all beliefs? Peace. It would be peaceful.

We should all take the scriptural promise "the lion shall lay down with the lamb," to heart. There is a perfect example of what we should strive to achieve in life. A mighty and proud symbol of fearlessness finds peace in a quieter, gentle being. Each and every one of us should try to incorporate this into our everyday lives, in order to set an example of peace for others.

Seize the day. The future is bright. We can make it anything we wish. Don't be afraid to speak your mind or stand up for what you believe in, for we must all make a contribution to shape our society. Believe in the possibility of peace, as we stand on the brink of the millennium. There's no time like the present, and no day but today.

Pine Creek High school students, Meg Young and Judith Barrett are each 14 years

The Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission is composed of people who, while looking to other traditions for inspiration and welcoming the participation and membership of all people, are grounded in the principles of justice and peace which are integral to the teachings of Jesus:

reverence for all creation
the power of nonviolence
solidarity with the poor and oppressed
the transforming qualities of relationship, reconciliation and community

Our task is to facilitate growth toward justice and peace in ourselves and in our sisters and brothers of the Pikes Peak community by providing alternative sources of information, facilitating formative experiences, and encouraging prophetic witness.

PPJPC Board of Directors: Beverly Ann Jahn - president, Jenny Finn- treasurer, Dorothy Schlaeger- director, Susan Gordon, Barbara Huber, Esther Kisamore, Molly Mulligan, Tom Noonan, Mary Sprunger-Froese, Denis Wermuth

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Soldiers

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Yet tens of thousands of children are forced to join up, at gunpoint. In Angola military commanders have paid police officers to find new recruits and Namibia has collaborated with Angola in catching Angolans who have fled to Namibia to avoid conscription.

In Uganda, the Lords of Resistance (LRA) systematically abduct children from their schools, communities and homes. Those who attempt to escape, resist, cannot keep up, or become ill are killed. Generally, the rebels take their captives across the border to an LRA camp in Sudan. There, these children are tortured, threatened and sexually abused. Latest reports suggest that the LRA has now turned to selling abducted children in exchange for arms.

Children enrolled by force into armed opposition groups often have little choice but to remain and fight. In Uganda, for example, if abducted children escape or surrender, they face the wrath of the government. Despite claims made on Ugandan TV by the armed forces that they are "rescuing children daily, and handing them over to charity organizations for care." In January 1999, the Ugandan army executed four teenaged boys between the ages of 14 and 17 suspected of being rebel soldiers. In April 1998, 25 boys were charged with treason and are still waiting trial. They face the death penalty even though they were abducted by rebels and used as child soldiers.

Some are beginning to recognize the dangers of children as soldiers. "Its true they can hold a gun and fight, but you spoil the education of a child," Songolo, a rebel commander in the DRC said, adding that he is against the practice but has seen many child soldiers in the country. "Their minds go bad...they become criminal if the leave." Indeed there are reports that Sudan's Liberation Army (SPLA), which has used thousands of children in their struggle against the regime in Kartoum, is finally realizing that they have created a generation of children who cannot read or write and who know only the respect that is earned by the barrel of a gun. It remains to be seen whether they are truly willing to stop recruiting children and to demobilize those who are currently serving in their ranks.

In conclusion, while many African nations effectively protect their children against military recruitment and use as soldiers, others do not, even failing to meet the standards they themselves set. In a statement to the United Nations Security council on February 1999, Carol Bellamy, executive Director of UNICEF, declared that "We would be derelict if we did not reiterated in the strongest possible terms, that until the minimum age of recruitment is universally set at 18, the ruthless exploitation of children as soldiers will continue." The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers wholeheartedly endorses this statement.
For more information contact: International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: FAX: +33 450 44 2840 E-mail: child.soldiers@wanadoo.fr website: www.childsoldiers.org

Excerpted from a paper given at the Hague by the International Coalition to stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

PEACE PLANNER

EVERY MONTH*

Anyone interested in joining should contact Peter, 471-3405 or Dee, 685-1984. Nonviolent peace activists regularly keep vigil at various military bases:

- every Monday at Fort Carson
- the first and second Tuesday at Peterson AFB
- the fourth Tuesday at Schriever AFB

* Every Monday at 6 pm Epimethian Press invites folks to First Congregational Church, N. Tejon and St. Vrain, to fill prisoners' book requests.

* Third Wednesday of every month, the Colorado Coalition Against Gun Violence meets 3-5 pm in Denver at the Mile High United Way, 2505 18th St. Call CCAGV (303) 298-8001 for info.

* Third Saturday of every month the Housing Coalition meets at St. Mary's Cathedral, 22 W. Kiowa, 1 to 3 pm.

* Fourth Thursday of every month the Colorado Springs Chapter of Coloradoans Against the Death Penalty meets J&P office, 235 E. Fountain, at 6pm.

* For up-to-the-minute information on Citizens for Peace in Space (CPIS) activities, call Bill, 389-0644.

N.B. CALENDAR ITEMS IN BOLD TYPE ARE THOSE PROGRAMS SPONSORED OR CO-SPONSORED BY PIKES PEAK JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

FEBRUARY

Tuesday, February 1
Colorado Prison Construction Moritorium Lobby Day
9 am to 12 noon: meet at the State Democratic Office on the 2nd floor of the Capitol Building.

Tuesday, February 1
Fast in Progress
Voices in the Wilderness activists against the Sanctions in Iraq are in Washington DC fasting and lobbying congress to end the sanctions.

Wednesday, February 2
Hearings on a State Moratorium of Prison Construction
State Senate Judiciary Committee will hold hearings on SB 000-104, third floor hearing room, at 1:30 pm.

Thursday, February 3
Day of Solidarity with U'wa People of Columbia
This indigenous group are threatening mass suicide if Occidental Petroleum is allowed to begin oil-drilling operations on their ancestral lands. For information: Grassroots Coordinator, Rainforest Action Network, 221 Pine St. Suite 500, San Francisco CA 94104, fax:415/398-2764.

Saturday, February 5
Urban Experience
The Confirmation class of Sacred Heart Church will participate in an Urban Experience. For information call Esther 632-6189.

Sunday, February 6
Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission monthly Board Meeting at 4 pm followed by a potluck supper welcoming PPJP's two new VISTA workers, Margot Zahner and Shea Pickelner at 6 pm at 235 E Fountain Blvd. All members are welcome to audit the meeting and share supper.

Monday, February 7
Peace in Iraq Coalition
Strategy meeting at 6:30 at the PPJP office.

Tuesday, February 8
Colorado Springs delegation leave to join the fast in Washington DC (see 2/1 above) and then proceed to New York demonstration (see 2/12-14 below).

Friday, February 11
CURE meeting
Multi-issue prison reform group working to reduce crime,recidivism, violence and rehabilitation of prisoners. St Mary Cathedral Center, 7 pm. For information call Carolyn Capplan 685-1648.

Saturday, February 12
Regional Women 2000: Charting the Future, Bejing +5 Summit
A regional (CO, WY, UT, MT, SD, ND) conference at the Denver Convention Center. This is one of a number of regional meetings in preparation for the UN Special Session June 5 to reaffirm the commitments made at '95 UN 4th World Conference in Bejing. For details: Sharon King, AFSC 303/623-3463.

Saturday thru Monday, February 12-14
Anniversary of the Bombing of the Ameriyah bomb shelter in Baghdad: We Remember, We Resist.
Voices in the Wilderness will join the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the New York Catholic Worker, the Atlantic Life Community and others for a weekend of events in preparation for a nonviolent direct action at the US Mission to the UN on Monday 2/14.

Monday, February 14
End Sanctions Demonstration
Anniversary of the bombing of the Ameriyah shelter at the Post Office, 12 noon to 1 pm.

Wednesday, February 16
Voluntary Simplicity Orientation
Anyone wishing to be part of a Voluntary Simplicity Circle should make a reservation to attend at 7 pm, Pikes Peak Justice & Peace Commission, 235 E. Fountain Blvd. Please call 632-6189.

Thursday, February 17,
Back from Iraq
The Denver delegation to Iraq will report back at First Plymouth Congregational Church, 3501 Colorado Blvd, corner of Colorado and Hampden..

Thursday, February 24
Job Discrimination/Sexual Harassment Forum
A trained professional from "Nine to Five" and a Colorado Employment Dept. Lawyer will conduct the Forum. It Free and confidential. 6 to 8 pm at the Hillside Community Center, 925 S. Institute at Fountain. Child care and translation will be provided upon request. Call "Nine to Five" 800/522-0925.

Saturday, February 26
Urban Experience
Saint Paul's Confirmation class will participate in an Urban Experience. For information call Esther 632-6189.

Saturday, February 26
Class Act on the Road
First Strike Theatre takes, "Class Act" to Cheyenne, Wyoming. 7 pm, Unitarian Universalist Church, 3003 Thomas Ave. For information call: 307/638-4554 .

MARCH

Sunday, March 5
Pikes Peak Justice & Peace Commission Board Meeting 4 pm PPJP office 235 E. Fountain Blvd. All members are welcome to audit.

Sunday, March 12
Benefit Charlie King/Karen Brandow Concert
First Strike Theatre will open for Charlie King and Karen Brandow at Packard Hall, Colorado College campus at 3 pm. This is a benefit concert for the Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Scholarship Fund.

APRIL

April 2-19
Call Congress to Close the SOA
Kick-off Rally in Washington DC and simultaneous rallies all over the nation Sunday 4/2. Monday 4/3 those in Washington will lobby Congress; From throughout the nation calls will go into Congress. From 4/6 to 4/19 2,000 groups in D.C and throughout the nation will participate in a juice-only fast to close the School of the Americas. Contact: SOA Watch, PO Box 4566, Washington DC 20017; www.soaaw.org

Sunday , April 9
Jubilee 2000 National Mobilization on the Mall Washington DC
All who care about justice for impoverished countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia will gather at the Mall in Washington DC. Be part of the the public witness. Demand the World Bank, the IMF and the US Congress ACT NOW for debt cancellation for the world's poorest countries. For more information: hhp://www.j2000usa.org.

Friday thru Monday,April 14-17
Keep Space for Peace Conference
Bill Sulzman, Donna Johnson and Loring Wirbel will represent CPIS at Conference. The Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space is gearing up the campaign to stop the National Missile Defense (NMD "Star Wars) system. For information call Bill 389-0644.

SUPPORT THE COMMISSION

Yearly subscription to Active for Justice $15

Yearly subscription and Commission membership $40

Name: _____

Address: _____

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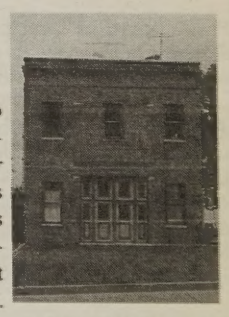
(W) _____

Please clip and return with your tax-deductible donation to:

Pikes Peak Justice and Peace Commission
235 East Fountain Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903-1329
(719) 632-6189

New Office update

Molly Mulligan



The response to the announcement of the renovation of the Firehouse at 29 S. Institute to house the PPJP office has been most encouraging. People have made commitments to serve on the Building Committee, help out and have, so, far donated $1,718 toward the project bringing our total to $31,218.

The Building Committee is up and running and the contracts are being signed for the new roof, heating system and windows. There will be some "work days"planned for later this month to clean up and clear out clutter and construction dust and dirt. Those who've volunteered will be contacted.

Anyone who missed the January *Active for Justice* and its sign-up form is still very welcome to be part of this project. We can use your experience, skills, donations or loans of tools, equipment, supplies, the use of a moving van and financial assistance. Join the fun and help us make it happen!

PPJP Office manager, Molly Mulligan, is chairing the building committee